



# News Release

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**For Release:** January 9, 2009

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## **Assessment of the Mexican Wolf Program Available for Review**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has drafted a Mexican Wolf Conservation Assessment to broadly address the long-term conservation needs for the Mexican wolf. The assessment is available for public review and comment until March 10, 2009.

The Service uses three scientific principles to guide gray wolf recovery efforts in other parts of the country. The assessment analyzes the extent to which these principles are being fulfilled in the Southwest. The three key principles fundamental to the recovery of the gray wolf are resiliency, redundancy, and genetic representation. Resiliency means ensuring that populations are large enough numerically and geographically to persist in the foreseeable future. Redundancy is the need to have more than one population to lessen a species' vulnerability. Genetic representation ensures that genetic diversity is maintained.

The assessment also contains an historical overview and appraisal of the agency's conservation and recovery efforts for the Mexican wolf. "The conservation assessment will serve as an up-to-date scientific foundation for the program," said Benjamin N. Tuggle, Ph.D., the Service's Southwest Regional Director. "It will help to inform the many other components of our conservation efforts for the Mexican wolf, including captive management, reintroduction, and recovery planning and implementation."

A recovery plan was developed for the Mexican wolf in 1982. Revised recovery planning for the Mexican wolf has been put on hold due to litigation over the status of gray wolves in other regions of the United States. The conservation assessment does not replace revised recovery planning, but can serve as an important foundation for future recovery planning.

Every species granted Endangered Species Act protection is qualified through a five-factor analysis; if the species meets one of the factors it is eligible for listing as threatened or endangered. The same criteria are used to determine when a species no longer requires the protection of the ESA. These five factors are reassessed periodically while the species is listed to evaluate its status and ensure that conservation actions are appropriately tailored to address current threats to the species. The Mexican wolf is examined in the conservation assessment through each factor to see if threats have increased, decreased or stayed the same. Public opinion has long been recognized as a significant factor in the success of gray wolf recovery efforts. The assessment validates that public opinion continues to be an important aspect.

The document will undergo peer-review by independent scientists to ensure its objectivity, integrity and credibility.

The conservation assessment is not a regulatory document nor is it related to recent legal actions on wolves in the northern or Great Lake states. While it isn't tied to the Service's anticipated modification to the rule that established the Mexican wolf reintroduction project, it may be used to inform the rule-making process.

Copies of the notice are available on the internet at [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/) or by contacting John Slown, Biologist, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87113; telephone: 505/761-4782, facsimile 505/346-2542, e-mail: [John\\_Slown@fws.gov](mailto:John_Slown@fws.gov).

You may submit written comments on the draft assessment by any one of the following means: (1) By U.S. mail to John Slown at the Albuquerque address above; (2) by fax to the number above, or (3) e-mail to [mexwolfdca@fws.gov](mailto:mexwolfdca@fws.gov).

The assessment was developed in coordination with the Service's partners. The reintroduction of the Mexican wolf is a cooperative, multi-agency effort of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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